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# V E R S E S

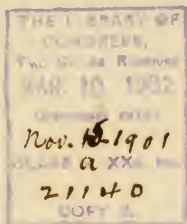
by BESSIE CHANDLER



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IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
RALPH CHANDLER,  
REAR ADMIRAL, U. S. N.,  
WHO DIED AT HONG KONG  
FEBRUARY 11th, 1889

THERE is a spot,—they call it “Happy  
Valley”—

I cannot think of it, with eyes undim;  
For there beside the restless sea of China,  
There—underneath the palms, they buried  
him.

No mournful hearse with stately, gloomy  
trappings,  
Laid its black shadow on his quiet breast,  
But, like a giant stooping to be gentle,  
The great gun-carriage bore him to his rest.

No solemn, sable plumes above him nodded,  
No funeral pall beneath in dark folds fell;  
He lay, wrapped in the flag that he had  
fought for,  
The starry flag, that he had loved so well.

And strangers in a strange land paused to  
show him

Such homage as one gives a good man dead;  
And yet no honour in that hour could equal  
The silent tears that his own sailors shed.

Then o'er his open grave they fired a volley,  
And then instead of funeral chants or psalms,  
A bugler gave the call to rest at evening,  
And so, they left him—underneath the  
palms.

It was so far away I could not send them  
One little flower to lay upon his grave,  
So far, that only love and grief could travel,  
Those weary miles of land and wind-tossed  
wave.

But now, to-day, for his dear sake, I gather  
And send from my heart to that sea-locked  
land,  
These few poor flowers of verse,—not worth  
the giving,  
Unless he knows, then he will understand.



## IN LOVING MEMORY

11

They are imperfect,—yes, and all unworthy  
To lay on that green grave, so far away;  
But he,—who loved me,—loved my little  
                  verses,

And I,—who loved him,—give him all to-day.

**A**LL things are changed since first I met  
you, sweet;  
My soul is like a flame of pure desire.  
Hot is my heart, and wild its troubled beat,—  
My mother lays the brand upon the fire!

For at my birth they came, those mystic three,  
Like soft dim shadows in their robes of gray  
And one said life would only last for me,  
Till on the hearth the brand had burned away,

Ah, then my mother snatched it with sure  
hand,  
And drew it from its fiery bed unharmed,  
And she has guarded all these years, the brand  
And so I live as one whose life is charmed.

But now,—I know not—does my mother  
tire?  
Or have I angered her some fateful day?  
Surely she lays the brand upon the fire,  
Surely my life burns with its flame away.

THE SONG OF MELEAGER 13

All things are changed, sweet, since I first met  
you,

Vanished like smoke above a funeral pyre.  
The old life passes,—will you give me new?  
My mother lays the brand upon the fire!

ON A HEAD OF CHRIST BY QUIN-  
TIN MATSYS (*Fifteenth Century*)

**A**grieving face, adown whose hollow cheek  
The bright tears fall from tender mourn-  
ful eyes;

Eyes, sad with never finding what they seek,  
Lips, curved by many weary wasting sighs.

The tear-drops glisten,—frail they seem and  
slight,

As though a breath would sweep them into  
air;

And yet four hundred years of day and night  
Have passed since first the painter formed  
them there.

How strange that they should last, those  
painted tears,

While kingdoms perish, nations fall and rise;  
Strange that through all the stormy rush of  
years

They lie unchanged in those sad, grieving  
eyes.

ON A HEAD OF CHRIST BY QUIN-  
TIN MATSYS (*Fifteenth Century*)

Does He still mourn? The world from Him  
enticed

Wanders afar, and will not walk His way.

O patient One! O weary, watching Christ,  
Are the tears wet upon Thy face to-day?

THERE was a giant in the ages olden,  
Greater than other giants from his birth,  
Who for his strength and courage was  
                  beholden  
To her,—that mightiest of mothers—Earth.  
And just to show him that she held him dearer  
Than other men, and blessed and loved him  
                  more,  
Each time he touched her close, came near  
                  and nearer,  
She made him stronger than he was before.  
Though he were worn with wasting wounds  
                  unnumbered,  
Gained in fierce conflict with the sons of men,  
He put his head in her great lap and slumbered,  
And when he wakened he was strong again.

Antaeus, even now our hearts are beating  
With the same blood that throbbed in thine  
at birth,

Across the centuries, we send thee greeting,  
We are thy brothers, born of that same earth !

Though through the year we journey on as  
strangers,

That wander far from her who loves them best,  
And meet with many troubles, many dangers,  
And seek in vain, for any place of rest,—

See how we start when Spring's white buds  
are bursting;

See how we thrill when first the robins call;

See how we rush to our great mother, thirst-  
ing

Just for one look of her who made us all !

We know her in the pussy-willows' gleaming,  
We hear her in the nesting birds' low song.  
Where drowsy ferns awaken from their dream-  
ing,  
And wild flowers bloom, we touch her and  
grow strong.

With gladdened eyes we look at one another,  
No fear of coming evil haunts us then,  
For like Antaeus, we have touched our  
Mother,  
And in that touch, she makes us strong again.



SHE lay within her chamber, pale and ill,  
Bound to her bed by cruel bonds of pain,  
Outside the leaves were falling—all was still  
Save for the dripping of the dull, sad rain.

The elms that year were yellow, all the way  
From top, to those low boughs that cling  
                    and grace  
Their tall straight trunks, like little curls that  
                    stray  
And cling, caressing, o'er a woman's face.

And through the leaves as through a yellow  
                    pane,

The light shone in, all golden, on her bed,  
And every morn, unwitting of the rain,  
"Another sunny day," she, smiling, said.

She never knew how gloomy, dark, and gray  
Those long days were. In time we came to  
                    bless

The elms, that gave her sunshine every day,  
And robbed the rain of all its dreariness.

\* \* \*

Has the world grown as sunny as I ween?  
I cannot see it clearly, as of old,  
For like the elms, your love has come between  
My life and me, and turned it all to gold !

**I** fear not God,—if in yon far blue Heaven  
There be a God—he knows man from the  
start,—

Knows all the woe and anguish to him given,—  
I fear not God—for God can read the heart.

I fear not man,—his scorn or his reviling.  
Though I should stand apart, a thing accurst  
I yet could meet all his contempt with smiling  
I fear not man, for man has done his worst.

I only fear the eyes of loving faces,  
Dead long ago, and buried out of sight.  
I see them in the dark and dusky places  
I see them looking at me in the night.

They watched me once because they loved  
me dearly,

Now pained and sorrowful I see them grow;  
And from that other world they see so clearly  
Those eyes I closed with kisses long ago !

**L**ONG ago, in old Granada, when the  
Moors were forced to flee,  
Each man locked his home behind him, tak-  
ing in his hand the key.

Hopefully they watched and waited, for the  
time to come when they  
Should return from their long exile, to those  
homes so far away.

But the mansions in Granada, they had left in  
all their prime,  
Vanished, as the years rolled onward, 'neath  
the crumbling touch of time.

Like the Moors we all have dwellings, where  
we vainly long to be,—  
And through all life's changing phases, ever  
fast we hold the key.

Our fair country lies behind us; we are exiles,  
too, in truth.

For no more shall we behold her,—our Gran-  
ada's name is youth.

We have our delusive day-dreams, and rejoice  
when now and then,  
Some old heart-string stirs within us, and we  
feel our youth again.

“We are young!” we cry triumphant, thrilled  
with old-time joy and glee,  
Then the dream fades slowly, softly, leaving  
nothing but the key!

**S**CANT beauty nature gave her; in disguise

Rugged and harsh, she bade her go about  
With face unlovely save the dark, sad eyes  
From which her fearless soul looked bravely  
out.

But life took up the chisel, used her face  
Roughly with many blows, as sculptors use a  
block.

It wrought a little while, and lo, a grace  
Fell, as a sun-beam falls upon a rock.

Across her soul a heavy sorrow swept,  
As tidal waves sweep sometimes o'er the land,  
Leaving her face when back it ebbed and  
crept,

Tranquil and purified, like tide-washed sand.

And of her face, her gentleness grew part,  
And all her holy thoughts left there their  
trace.

A great love found its way within her heart,  
Its root was there its blossom in her face,

Lo when death came, to set the white soul  
    free  
From the poor body, that was never fair;  
We watched her face and marveled much to  
    see  
How life had carved for death an angel  
    there.

SOMETIMES, upon a dusty country  
road,

We meet a breath of sudden sweet perfume,  
And find alone, aloof from all abode,  
Old-fashioned roses rioting in bloom.

Near by, half hidden in the knee-deep grass,  
The myrtle gleams, a richer, deeper green,  
And stares with blue eyed wonder as we pass,  
Then nestles low and dreams itself unseen.

All signs of life or ownership have fled,  
Only the green grass stretches far and near;  
And yet the roses and the myrtle bed  
Say mournfully: "A home stood one day  
here."

\* \* \*

Dear friend, though you may look with cold,  
hard eyes

At all life's follies,—mock its joy and woe,  
You cannot trick me with your stern disguise;  
The secret of your buried life I know.



For once, beneath the furrows Time has  
                  plowed,  
Behind the stony wall the years have reared,  
I caught a glimpse of sweetness, unavowed,—  
A tender look that came and disappeared.

And now, though unbent will and iron nerve  
Have moulded all your face with cruel art,  
I see around your mouth that tender curve,  
And know that once Love dwelt within  
                  your heart.

## THE SKELETON AT THE FEAST

OF old they placed at every victor's side  
A grinning skeleton who sat in state,  
And chilled the joy and clouded all the pride,  
And held men humble though their deeds  
were great.

Sometimes the guests would turn to him and  
bow;

Sometimes, his royal empire to recall,  
They'd place a crown upon his fleshless brow,  
For kings may reign, but Death is Lord of all!

Yet they were not deceived—their eyes were  
keen;

The dead thing crowned, no living power was  
deemed,

And though they honored him with look and  
mien,

They knew him, for the grisly thing he  
seemed.

To-day we do not know,—for see! we two  
Sit smiling at each other, side by side;  
Are you alive? I cannot tell, and you—  
You do not know how long ago I died!

**A**FTER long watching and waiting I  
have found thee !  
Thou are the fairest, the sweetest one I know.  
See—I have caught thee—I fling my arms  
around thee,  
Fast, fast I hold thee and will not let thee go!  
What ! dost thou struggle, nor tamely will  
surrender !  
What ! dost thou strike me, wild creature  
that thou art !  
Ah, but I know thee—thou loving art and  
tender;  
Underneath the sea-nymph lies the woman's  
heart.  
Vainly thou strivest ! Those white arms can-  
not smite me,  
I will but kiss them along their soft white  
length,—  
Now—art a lioness, that thou should tear and  
bite me ?  
Look—Love is stronger than all thy lion's  
strength!

Fast, fast I hold thee and now I can but fear  
thee !

Is it a serpent that hisses soft and low,  
Slimy and writhing, whose baneful eyes burn  
near me ?

Woman or serpent—I will not let thee go !

Then, through my fingers, like limpid, run-  
ning water,

Softly thou flowest,—I clasp each wayward  
wave,

Hearing low laughter. Oh sea-king's mock-  
ing daughter,

Still in thy ripples, forever I will lave !

Now to my bosom, a fiery figure presses,  
Leaping and lambent, a form of living flame,  
Wreathing around me, with wicked, wild  
caresses,—

Cruel, mad caresses, that only scar and maim !

Yet how I love thee! These torturing dis-  
guises

Are but as phantoms, that have no part in thee.  
Fast, fast I hold thee, in spite of all surprises,  
Till the true woman comes back again to me!

What! All is over, and in my arms art lying,  
Sobbing thy heart out upon my wounded  
breast?

Hush, hush! No pain, dear, can hurt me  
like thy crying;

Kissed are thy eyelids, thy heart on mine, at  
rest.

There—I have loosed thee! I will not hold  
thee weeping!

Leave me—return to that old free life of thine!

Surely I dream! Are *thy* arms around *me*  
creeping!—

Fast, fast I hold thee, my love, forever mine!

SOMETIMES I cry: "Oh, give my  
tired heart rest !

It is so weary of the throb and strain  
Of loving, weary of the stress and strain  
Of care for others. Pluck love from it, lest  
It faint neath the burden on it pressed ;  
As one takes work away from hand or brain,  
Saying: 'Rest a little, then work on again,'

So, take love from this thing within my breast;  
Give it from all its struggle glad release;  
Calm its wild beats and soothe its restless cry!"  
Then to myself my tired heart makes reply:  
"Oh, foolish one, should all my loving cease  
Thou wouldst have rest as clods and stones  
have peace,  
Lifeless, inert—for without love I die !"

THERE was one heart in Brussels years  
ago,—

My own heart tells me that this thing is  
true,—

One breaking heart that night of Waterloo;  
It was a woman's heart, I seem to know,  
Whose smiling face its anguish sought to hide,  
Whose dancing feet its heaviness belied;  
Yet when the cannon's voice broke rudely in  
And marred the music, then that heart grew  
light,—

Its misery was hushed amid the din;  
The fair face brightened in the dread and  
fright.

"Have you no fear?" they asked, who wept  
and fled.

"At least the dance is ended now," she said.

There is one heart here in the world to-day,—  
My own heart tells me that this thing is true,—  
That unsuspected goes upon its way,  
And dances, as the other dancers do.  
Yet should the day come when the trumpet's  
                    voice  
Shall still all other music here below,  
That heart would leap, and quicken, and  
                    rejoice,  
And say, amid the universal woe,—  
“What is there now, for us to dread or fear,  
Since life, at least, is ended for us here?”



*The Fabled Prometheus*

ON a great rock upon a lonely shore,  
Beyond the awful Scythian desert waste,  
Where the wild earth the wilder ocean faced  
And met with onslaught and with battle

roar,—

There was he sent, who fire from heaven bore;  
There by Jove's mighty forces was he placed,  
His strong, grand limbs with bolted chains  
disgraced,

While earth and air and sea cried, "Hope no  
more!"

And there he stands, and evermore shall  
stand,

Unyielding, in defiant attitude,—

The type of all who, in whatever land,  
Meet life's hard blows in grim, defiant mood;  
Who though bound fast by fate with iron  
hand,

Defy her, conquered but yet unsubdued.

*Isaac*

**L**ONG years ago, up Mt. Moriah's side,  
An old man and a youth toiled on their  
way,—

The old man bore a heavy heart that day,  
And he would glance with fond, despairing  
pride

At the boy's face, and then he seemed to pray,  
But heard no answer save the word "Obey."  
So on they climbed led by an unseen guide.

To that young boy, who saw with undimmed  
eyes,

The world was fair, and life was sweet, but  
still,

Though in his heart a vast regret would rise,  
He bore his heavy burden up the hill,  
And let himself be bound for sacrifice,  
And murmured not—it was his father's will.

HE leaned from out the dusty car,  
And looked far up the village street,  
Where great green boughs met overhead,  
And all the air was soft and sweet—

He watched, half wistful, half amused,  
The country traffic ebb and flow,  
The farmers' wagons in the shade,  
The village people come and go—

A little girl stood near the track,  
With cheeks that matched her fresh pink  
gown,

She watched the train that blocked her way,  
With quick, impatient little frown.

He felt the charm of simple things,  
The magic of a drowsy day.  
Then the bell rang, the whistle screamed,  
And he was whirled upon his way.

He had no thought that summer noon  
That this small village, fresh and green,  
Would come to be his fairy-land,  
Where that young girl would reign, his  
                    queen.

Nor did she dream while standing there,  
Impatient of the slight delay,  
This train was an enchanted coach,  
That bore her lover far away!

**L**IKE a poor wakeful child, who, left  
alone,  
Feels unknown terrors in the hush of night,  
And lifts his voice, not once but many times,  
Calling his mother, begging her to come,  
Craving her presence in his loneliness,  
And then, ere she has come to soothe and  
cheer,  
Falls fast asleep, nor needs her any more;  
Nor knows if late she answered to his call,  
And paused with gentle step beside his bed,  
And sighed a little even as she smiled  
And kissed him, softly leaving him again;  
So did I call you, Fame. So all my heart  
Cried for your coming. Through the deep-  
ening gloom  
I strained my eyes,—I listened if perchance  
Only your far-off foot-step I might hear.  
But you were deaf to my beseeching cry,  
No pleading voice could draw you to my side,  
And then,—I fell asleep. Now you are here.

And have you come to smile upon me once,  
And kiss my lips and hold my hands in yours?  
Nay, but I cannot tell you I am glad!  
Nor would I waken, though it were to see  
Your face, dear Fame—for you have come  
too late!

**A**S mothers sometimes draw their children  
near,  
And gaze into their eyes and kiss their  
mouths,  
And say, "You do not love me," knowing the  
while  
How full the child-heart beats with love for  
them,  
Yet say it for the keen ecstatic joy  
Of hearing that which is so sweet to hear;  
So do we say in this sad day of ours,  
"There is no God; there is no good, no hope."  
And believe it not, but wait with wistful hearts  
And eager ears to hear our words denied.  
Men call us faithless—we, who yearn for  
faith;  
Who long to hail the one that shall arise,  
And fling our cheap words back at us with  
scorn,  
And with impellent, passionate, grand faith,  
Proclaim the precious thing we long to hear.

**W**HO is there now knows aught of his  
story?

What is left of him but a name?

Of him who shared in Napoleon's glory,  
And dreamed that his sword had won him his  
fame!

Ah ! the fate of a man is past discerning !  
Little did Jacqueminot suppose,  
At Austerlitz or at Moscow's burning,  
That his fame would rest in the heart of a rose!



SOMEWHERE there is a stone: I go to  
meet it,  
And all life bears me onward like a wave,  
Yet when we meet, I shall not know nor greet it,  
For it will come to rest upon my grave.

Where is it now? Still in the earth embos-  
omed,  
And waiting for my death to set it free?  
Or 'neath the chisel's touch already blossomed,  
And lacking only in its tale of me?

Oh, strange that ere my life had a beginning,  
That stone was made, and for no other man,  
And all my years of sorrow and of sinning,  
Are but the end for which its life began!

I journey onward toward it, waking, sleeping;  
We may meet soon, or not till I am old,  
But neither love nor hate can stop my keep-  
ing  
The solemn tryst that stone and I must hold!

O H, my child, my pure and perfect man-  
child,  
With the light of heaven in your eyes,  
And your yellow hair like glory resting  
O'er a face so angel-sweet and wise!

Oh, my child, I hold your hand and tremble  
When I think of all that you must meet,  
On the way where there is naught to guide  
you,  
Save my clouded eyes and stumbling feet.

All the nobleness that sleeps within you,  
Waits my touch to waken into grace;  
Ah, the man you will be, haunts my future,  
With reproach, not love upon his face!

Is the gardener not appalled and daunted,  
When he sees but leafless twigs, and knows  
That within the bare brown things, there  
slumbers,  
Waiting for his waking hand, the rose?

So I fear, from fingers all unskillful,  
Some rude touch your perfect growth may  
mar;

If the pruning-knife slip but a little,  
You must carry, all your life, a scar.

Oh, my child, unknown, unconscious cur-  
rents

Meet and mingle in your young, warm blood;  
So, God help me when your soul shall blos-  
som,

And—God help me should I blight its bud!

**L**ONG years ago, so runs the ancient  
story,  
Two bells were sent from Spain to that far  
clime  
New found beyond the sea, that to God's  
glory,  
And in His house together they might chime.  
And to this day, one bell is safely swinging  
Within its shelt'ring tower, where clear and  
free,  
It hallows each day with its mellow ringing,—  
The other bell, the mate, was lost at sea.  
And when in gentle tones the bell is pealing,  
The people listen, for they say they hear  
An echo from the distant ocean stealing,—  
It is the lost one's answer, faint yet clear.  
Ah, love, like those two bells, we sailed to-  
gether,  
And you have reached your holy work and  
rest,  
But stormy was the way, and rude the weather  
And I was lost beneath the wave's white crest.

## THE TWO BELLS

47

Over my buried heart, the waters glisten,  
Across my breast the sea-weeds wave and  
twine,

Dead is my soul's best life, save when I listen  
And hear your spirit calling unto mine.

Then the old longing wakes, I start, I shiver,  
I try to burst the bonds which hold me dumb,  
I turn, I strive, with many a throe and quiver,  
I feebly answer, but I cannot come.

A little children gather 'round their  
mother  
And beg her a familiar tale to tell,  
One that is dearer far than any other,  
Because so often heard and known so well;  
And as they watch her, prompting, should she  
falter,  
And any variations quickly see,  
And cry, "don't tell it so—don't change and  
alter,  
We want it just the way it used to be!"—  
So do we come to thee, O Nature, Mother!  
And never tire of listening to thy tales.  
Tell us thy Springtime Story now—no  
other—  
That has a wondrous charm that never fails.  
Tell it with all the old-time strength and glory,  
Fill it with many a happy tone and shout;  
Don't miss one bird or blossom in the story,  
Don't leave one daffodil or daisy out.

Tell us each shade in all the trees' soft green-  
ing;

Don't skip one blade of grass, one leaf, one  
wren,

Each little thing has grown so full of meaning,  
In the dear story we would hear again.

O, Mother Nature, thou art old and hoary  
And wonderful and strange things thou cans't  
tell,

But we, like children love the Springtime  
Story,

And think it best, because we know know it  
well.

TO his dead heart alone I will surrender;  
He, whom death conquered, now has  
conquered me.

I held my fortress like a brave defender—  
Now it stands open for the world to see.

There was a castle once, in ancient story,  
Besieged by one so noble in his fame,  
That when he died the people thought it glory  
To yield him what no living knight could  
claim.

So, as he lay, in dented armor sleeping—  
A hero, after wearing strife at ease—  
They gathered near and gave into his keeping,  
Safe in his mailed hand, their castle keys.

So do I yield to-day to you, my lover  
Who died before my hard heart's frowning  
wall,  
And never knew its harshness did but cover  
Only a longing to surrender all.



Here are the keys, the last reserve is broken—  
What does it matter now since all is past?  
Let all men hear, and know that by this token  
I loved you only, loved you first and last.

## THE JOURNEY

52

IT is many a year since in sunny weather  
We started, nor cared if the way were long:  
There were Youth, Health, Love, and my-  
self: together

We sang, and our voices were clear and strong.

What joy we had in the beautiful weather !

How flowery the way that our path lay  
through!

How we laughed in the gladness we shared  
together!

How green were the fields, and the sky how  
blue!

If the sky grew gray, in the rainy weather  
Why, a dull gray sky could do us no harm;  
Or if chill winds blew, we were still together,  
Close, close together, and so kept warm.

But, alas, one day (it was autumn weather)  
Youth stopped, and his face was wan and  
white.

“We can journey no more,” he cried,  
“together;”

But he waved his hand, till we passed from  
sight.

Health faltered next (ah, bad was the  
weather!)

“I will join you,” he said, “in a little while;”  
So Love and I walked onward together,  
With backward glances for many a mile.

We have gone on since in all kinds of weather,  
We have waited for Health at each stopping-  
place,

And we sought in vain, thought we sought  
together,

For Youth, who left us with wan white face.

But I have not missed them, nor minded the  
weather,

Nor cared if I failed in every quest,  
For Love and I made the journey together;  
Love never left me; what mattered the rest?

## HE

**S**HE gave me a rose at the ball tonight,  
And I—I'm a fool, I suppose,  
For my heart beat high with a vague delight—  
Had she given me more than the rose?

I thought that she had, for a little while,  
Till I saw her—fairest of dancers—  
Give another rose, with the same sweet smile,  
To another man in the Lancers.

Well, roses are plenty and smiles not rare;  
It is really rather audacious  
To grumble because my lady fair  
Is to other men kind and gracious.

Yet who can govern his wayward dreams?  
And my dream so precious and bright,  
Now foolish, broken, and worthless seems,  
As it fades, with her rose, tonight.

## THE MESSAGE OF THE ROSE 55

SHE

I GAVE him a rose at the ball tonight—  
A deep red rose, with fragrance dim,  
And the warm blood rushed to my cheeks  
with fright,  
I could not, dared not look at him.

For the depths of my soul he seemed to  
scan,—

His earnest look I could not bear,  
So I gave a rose to another man—  
Any one else—I did not care.

And yet, spite of all, he has read, I know,  
My message—he could not have missed it;  
For his rose I held to my bosom, so,  
And then to my lips, while I kissed it.

**I**T seems like a hundred years ago,  
That we traveled once through the drifted  
snow

To meet 'round the Christmas-tree.  
You were a child, with a fair, round face,  
And you hung on the tree, with a shy, sweet  
grace,  
Your Christmas present for me.

'Twas a scarlet, beaded pincushion heart,  
Brilliant and shiny—a triumph of art—  
With a bead bird on it—a dove.  
'Twas bought of a “squaw” (who spoke with  
a brogue),  
And you said in your note—dear little rogue—  
That you gave it me “with your love.”

Well, that little red heart has been with me  
Through distant countries far over the sea,  
Crossed river, mountain and lake;  
Though never a pin have its tough sides  
known,  
For the heart was as hard as Pharaoh's own,  
But I loved it for your sake.

We're very much older and wiser now,  
We meet with a formal word and bow,  
And many more things we know;  
We don't hang our hearts on trees, I believe,  
Nor wear them either upon our sleeve;  
Is it better, I wonder, so?

The tree is laden with gifts tonight,  
And the colored tapers are gleaming bright,  
And the Christ-Child floats above;  
But my hoped-for gift isn't on the tree,  
I want a heart,—will you give it to me,  
As you did before, “with your love”?

**I** SAW the eastern sky aflame last night  
With rose-like colors, gloriously clear,  
While in the west the sun had sunk from sight,  
And clouds hung like a pall upon a bier.

So was your face, my darling, when you died,  
Bright with the glory that I could not see;  
For, though with straining, tear-dimmed eyes  
I tried,  
Only grief-laden clouds appeared to me.



ST. VALENTINE'S DAY IN THE MORNING 59

NOW, Mercury wears a suit of gray,  
And his twisted stick he has given away  
For a bag slung over his shoulder,  
While the feathery wings have left his feet,  
Yet he hurries along on his daily beat,  
Though the weather grows colder and colder.

He brings me a letter from *her* today:  
Now what in the world will my lady say?  
My mind is in wild disorder  
As I tear the dainty paper apart,  
When out falls a blood-red velvet heart,  
With a row of pins for a border !

Well, I pick up the pretty, useless thing,  
And love it, for here did her fingers cling;  
Yet I cannot choose but wonder  
Is it an emblem, a symbol true;  
Will she pierce *my* heart so, through and  
through,  
Till its depths are torn asunder?

## ST. VALENTINE'S DAY IN THE MORNING 60

I think how a harsh word hurts and stings ;  
I think of a thousand hard, cruel things ;  
For one gains with love, and one loses.  
Then I think of my dear one's sweet pure face,  
And my heart again at her feet I place—  
Let her plant there just what she chooses!

And her pin-cushion—why, without a doubt,  
The pins were meant to be *taken out* !  
How blind I have been, and stupid !  
So this is the message she sends today:  
She will take each sting from my heart away,  
And undo the work of Cupid !

I THINK that poems are like precious  
stones, and some,  
Like opals where the hidden fire doth gleam  
and curl,  
And others where the lights in sparkling  
flashes come,  
And some are calm and restful, like a pearl.  
We read our poems, too, just as we wear our  
gems,  
Not 'mid the work and dust which would  
their lustre spoil,  
But at those times when rest the day's fierce  
torrent stems,  
And we are free from the great spell of toil.  
And yet some things we wear, through daily  
task and strife,  
A locket, or a chain or some such simple thing,  
Because we love the giver, or because our life  
Is tangled in it—like a wedding ring.

And so there are some poems—each one  
    knows his own—  
Whose ringing when it finds us, never quite  
    departs,—  
Although we hear it best when we are most  
    alone,—  
And these we wear at all times in our hearts.

“THE Greeks have fled,” so rings the  
                                 Trojan cry,  
 And forth they rush in joy no man restrains,  
 Nor dream that they the foe in ambush by,  
 Laughs, as they hasten to the battle plains.

“’Twas there they set the battle in array,  
 Here were Achilles’ tents, see, naught re-  
                                 mains,  
 There were the ships, but all have gone away!”  
 Thus lightly talk they on those battle-plains.  
                                 \* \* \*

Oh, weary souls who deem the conflict past,  
 Trust not your foe, defeat he only feigns,  
 So bar again your gates and portals fast,  
 And go not forth to your old battle-plains.

Banish what you have suffered from your  
                                 thought,  
 No comfort comes in dwelling on your pains;  
 Think not of all the conflicts you have fought,  
 And go not forth to your old battle-plains.

For somewhere each has suffered a defeat.  
And somewhere each a victory attains;  
Leave it behind,—the bitter with the sweet,  
And go not forth to your old battle-plains!

## THE DEATH OF THE KING 65

**A** KING once fainted in the days of old  
(So runs a Spanish legend I have read)  
And lay with pallid face, so still and cold,  
That all the people cried: "the King is dead!"

So, in the custom of those ancient times,  
They made a monk of him who was a King,  
That thus his soul might rest from royal  
crimes,—

They shaved his head,—they took his signet  
ring,

And placed within his lifeless hand, instead,  
A crucifix, and holy vows they spoke,  
The cowl usurped the crown upon his head.  
When all was finished, lo, the King awoke!

Awoke to find that he was dead indeed—  
His reign was passed, his power, his greatness  
fled.

No more victorious armies would he lead,—  
How could he be a King when he was dead?

## THE DEATH OF THE KING 66

He left his throne, his court, his royal halls,  
He left the grave wherein he might not hide,  
And in the Abbey's silent, holy walls,  
He lived a monk, who had a monarch died.

\* \* \*

Why am I haunted by this tale today?  
Why in my thoughts so sadly does it ring?  
It is because a life has passed away  
That leaves me throneless,—I, who was a  
King?

The King of one true heart! Was I not  
blest?

But now,—I live, and yet my reign is past.  
My spirit in dull robes has Sorrow drest,  
And Grief, with many vows, has bound me  
fast.

I watch the world go by, with alien eyes.  
I seem a strange marked creature, set apart,  
And though I talk with men 'neath sunny  
skies,  
Am still walled-in, with silence in my heart.



## THE DEATH OF THE KING 67

Ah, Life may say, "Come rule me once again,"  
And Joy may plead, "Come follow where I  
tread,"

And Love may cry, "Oh, be my King!"—in  
vain;

How can I be a king, when I am dead?

And yet,—did he grow holy, that dead King,  
In these calm, cloistered days, when life was  
past?

And can there be so strange, so sweet a thing  
That in this death, I find my God at last?

I KNOW a tall straight tree, whose spread-  
ing branches wide,  
Gleam in the sun and quiver in the breeze  
And in its shelt'ring boughs, the little birds  
abide,  
And it is full of life and melodies.  
It is so great and strong, it does not seem to  
know  
Of that white line, drawn round it, like a spell,  
But I—I see the mark of each death-meaning  
blow,  
And every leaf to me, but waves farewell.

I know a noble life, that grandly in its place,  
Gives shelter to each hurt and helpless thing,  
That grows each day more fair, more full of  
strength and grace,

More gladdened with the songs, that true  
hearts sing.

And so, all unawares, through darkness and  
through light.

It lifts its dauntless head to distant skies,  
Yet death has girdled it,—oh life so fair and  
bright,

I cannot see you for the tears that rise!

U LYSSES, after many years of war,  
And weary wandering, to his home drew  
near,

So near, that o'er the peaceful waves he saw  
The lights of Ithaca burn bright and clear.

So near he almost listened for the sound  
Of dear familiar voices. Well he knew  
He held all evil winds securely bound;  
Only a gentle west wind softly blew.

And so he slept. The tale is sad today,  
Of how his comrades let the wild winds free  
That drove the ship from home and lights  
away,

And when he wakened, he was far at sea.

\* \* \*

I, weary as those men whom Homer sung,  
And restless as the sea that tossed their ships;  
I, speaking ever in an unknown tongue,  
Felt the cool hand of peace upon my lips.

I saw the harbor lights shine clear and bright  
Across the troubled water of my life,  
And hope stirred all my pulses with delight.  
I thought to rest, and end the long, hard  
    strife.

It was the light in your dear eyes that seemed  
To shine on me, and bid me no more roam,  
But enter in your heart; and there I dreamed  
That I might come as one comes to his home.

Then evil winds arose and blew with might;  
The salt spray passing, seemed to mock at me,  
The lights grew dim, then faded from my  
sight,

And I was driven out again to sea.

Yet, as storm-tossed Ulysses often thought  
How those dear lights from home, shone once  
so near,

So, I, who have with many troubles fought,  
Think of your eyes,—are they still blue and  
clear?

ONCE long ago, among the gods, rose  
Balder fair and bright,  
And laughing, bade them aim at him, because  
his life was charmed,  
So, though their spears and darts, they hurled  
at him with might,  
He stood amid the heavy rain of weapons,  
all unharmed.

Then there rose a poor blind god, one who  
loved Balder well,  
And with unerring, feeble aim, his harmless  
weapon sped—  
A piece of mistletoe! It struck and Balder  
fell,  
And all Valhalla rang with grief, and mourned  
for Balder dead.

And so sometimes the happiness that sings  
    within our heart,  
Against all heavy, evil blows that fate can  
    strike seems charmed;  
Our gladness sings unhurt, we laugh at each  
    new dart  
That dashes where our treasure is, and leaves  
    it all unharmed.

Then one who never meant us ill, speaks  
    but a little word,  
A careless, heedless word perhaps—a very  
    little thing,  
And happiness lies dead—dead like a singing  
    bird,  
That never more will spread its wing, that  
    never more will sing.



## THE WORD AND THE RESPONSE

75

ONE man has a message to deliver;  
Labors, till he gives his thought a name,  
When ten thousand dumb hearts throb and  
quiver,  
And leap toward his thought like flame to  
flame.

Like a cameo, clear-cut and shining,  
Stands his message; graven deep, and wrought  
Like intaglios, are the hearts divining  
All the truth and beauty of his thought.

It is good when one man comes thought-giv-  
ing,  
Though with faltering tongue or unskilled  
hand,—

It is better that somewhere are living  
All the thousand hearts that understand.

TO THE BRIDE IN "THE  
RUSSIAN WEDDING FEAST"

76

O SWEET, shy maiden, with the pale,  
pure face,  
Clad in the glory of your wedding gown,  
With head bent low beneath its shining crown,  
And slender form, alive with fear and grace,—  
Love's arm will hold you in this strange new  
place;

Lift from your eyes the snowy lids, cast down,  
Nor heed the jest of friend or village clown, —  
Trust Love, that will exalt you, not abase!

Oh, stand forever, maiden full of charm!  
The perfect type of that sweet, silent strife  
That comes to every woman, when Love's  
arm

Waits to enfold her, longs to crown her wife;  
'Mid the rough world that laughs at her alarm,  
Pressed by the known upon the unknown life!

THE thick June grasses cling around her  
feet,

All starred with daisies is the meadow wide,  
The clover lifts its balls of nectar sweet,  
And buttercups flash gold on every side.

She seeks to know her fate, to learn her lot;  
A daisy is her sibyl, pure and fair;  
The petals fall,—“he loves me, loves me not,”  
She murmurs as they flutter in the air.

\* \* \*

O maiden, poets write for us in vain,  
We push the printed page aside, and find  
In the low murmur of your soft refrain,  
The living, breathing music of mankind.

And the true wheels, which move the great  
round world,  
Are those, that in your slender hand you hold,  
Whose spokes are milk-white petals faintly  
curled,  
That cling, like thoughts, around a heart of  
gold.

THE tears streamed from her lovely, soft  
blue eyes,  
Flushed were her cheeks and bowed her slender frame,

As a great gust of bitter anguish came  
And held her in its grasp; with sobbing sighs  
It died away as winds die, soon to rise  
With greater fury, fanning all the flame  
Of her wild sorrow, till she could not tame  
The fire that raged within her. I, grown wise  
And old and weary, heard her sobbing sore,  
And watched her with compassion where she  
sat.

Then came a sudden envy as this truth  
Flashed through my heart that pitied her no  
more,—

Only the very young can grieve like that,—  
And I would take her sorrow with her youth!

“**S**HE has no heart,” they said. “If ever  
One throbbed within her woman’s  
breast,

Its beating long ago ceased forever;  
It troubles not her spirit’s rest.

“But fair and charmful as the ocean,  
A hundred changes play and go  
Across her face, but no emotion  
Touches the depths that lie below.”

So lovers came in vain. She pondered  
Their tender words, and smiled at first,  
Then sighed, “I have no heart,” and wondered,  
Was she of women blest or curst?

But suddenly a day of waking  
Came like a blinding flash of light:  
Her heart arose, and, bowed and shaking,  
Her whole soul trembled at the sight.

Her heart arose: like that blind giant,  
It held within its powerful clasp  
The pillars of her life, and pliant  
As reeds they seemed within its grasp.

It drew the mighty pillars over;  
They groaned and shuddered in their fall,  
And many a friend and many a lover,  
Was hurt beneath the shattered wall.

The temple of her life lay broken,  
And when the ruins were cleared away,  
Bleeding and dead, with words unspoken,  
She and her heart together lay.

A FAIR, sweet woman, who has lived her  
story,  
Standing serene though sad, a throneless  
queen,  
While still around her head there shines the  
glory  
Of all the happy days that she has seen.  
Yes, she has lived, has known earth's pomp  
and fashion,  
Held in her hand all things that women prize,  
Felt in her throbbing heart all true sweet  
passion,  
Looked in love's face with clear and steadfast  
eyes.

What does it matter that the time was fleeting?  
What does it matter that love could not last?  
Once she has lived and while her heart is  
beating  
She will remember all that blessed past.

Always around her path the old days linger,  
Weaving their meshes, like a golden spell,  
Touching her curved red lips with hushing  
finger,  
So that her secret she may never tell.

What though she look at you, with eyes  
beguiling?

What though, with parted lips, her face  
allures?

'Tis but the Mona Lizas, mystic smiling,  
Hiding her own heart while she laughs at  
yours.

Others may promise much,—she will remember,  
They will pass on, with careless happy tread,  
But she has lived,—she only is November,  
Laughing a little though her heart is dead!



LIFE lay before her, like an uncut book;  
Whose pages fair she opened without  
fear,—

We read it proudly, gladly, whose hearts  
burned

With love for her, and joy that we might look  
Upon her story; and we loved to hear  
The gentle rustle of the leaves she turned.

Unfinished—yet for us the tale is done.

Perhaps 'tis read in other, fairer lands,  
By eyes whose sight the salt tears do not blur,  
But in that chapter which she hath begun,  
We have no part, although, with trembling  
hands,

We long to turn the leaf and follow her.



# BRICABRAC VERSES.



I WROTE a poem once, in the hey-day of  
youth,  
And waited joyfully its printed form to scan;  
It is not published yet, and 'tis the solemn  
truth,  
That I am now an aged, aged man.

I wrote a little song about the "good, red wine,"  
And all the cheer around "the beaker's foam-  
ing edge,"  
And they kindly printed this drinking song of  
mine,  
Upon the very day I signed the pledge!

I wrote a sonnet, too, 'twas full of wild despair,  
Of blighted hope and love, and joy that flew  
away,  
And other dismal things—I could have torn  
my hair,  
To see it published on my wedding day!

I wrote once of how sweet it was to live—to be  
Upon this smiling earth, that blesses far and  
wide,

And, after many years, they sent the proof to  
me,

When I was thinking some of suicide!

I wrote some giddy lines (I hate to own it  
here),

That ended in “tra-la” and “how is that for  
high?”

And ’twill be just my luck to have that thing  
appear

As an obituary, when I die!

WITH spicy pine and with cedar fine,  
The walls of our home are garnished,  
And the holly gleams till it almost seems  
As if it had just been varnished!

There are wreaths and stars, there are ferns  
in jars,  
There are Christmas texts in places,  
And the ivy twines its rambling vines  
All over the curtains' laces.

Trimmed with loving care, the tree is there;  
It looks like a tall green spire,  
And its candles wait in solemn state  
For a touch of Promethean fire.

But fairer to me than the Christmas tree,  
Though with beautiful things we wreathe it,  
Is the mistletoe bough that my heart loves

now

For the fruit that grew once beneath it!

A PLAIN, grave man once grew quite  
celebrated;

Dame Grundy met him with her blandest  
smile;

And Mrs. Shoddy, finding him much *feted*,  
Gave him a dinner in her swellest style.

Her dining-table was a blaze of glory;  
Soft light from many colored candles fell  
Upon the young, the middle-aged, and  
hoary—

On beauty, and on those who “made up well.”

A piece of crimson plush across the table  
Shimmered its royal way from side to side,  
And Mrs. S., wherever she was able,  
Had loops and ends of satin ribbon tied.

Her china was a miracle of beauty—  
No service like it ever had been sold;  
And being unsmuggled, with the price and  
duty,

Was very nearly worth its weight in gold.



## THE IRONY OF GREATNESS 91

The flowers were wonderful—I think that  
maybe

Only another world has flowers more fair;  
Each rose was big enough to brain a baby,  
And there were several bushels of them there.

The serving was the acme of perfection;  
Waiters were many, silent, deft, and fleet;  
Their manner seemed a reverent affection;  
And oh, what stacks of things there were to eat!

And yet the man for all this honor singled,  
Would have exchanged it with the greatest  
joy

For one plain meal of pork and cabbage mingled,

Cooked by his mother when he was a boy!

**I** HAVE read your glorious letters,  
Where you threw aside all fetters,  
Spoke your thoughts and mind out freely, in  
your own delightful style,  
And I fear my state's alarming;  
For these pages are so charming,  
That my heart I lay before you,—take it,  
Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

And I sit here thinking, thinking,  
How your life was one long winking  
At poor Thomas' faults and failings, and his  
undue share of bile!  
Won't you own, dear, just between us,  
That this living with a genius  
Isn't after all, so pleasant,—is it  
Jeannie Welsh Carlyle?

There was nothing that's demeaning  
In those frequent times of cleaning,  
When you scoured and scrubbed and ham-  
                    mered, in such true housewifely  
                    style;

And those charming teas and dinners,  
Graced by clever saints and sinners,  
Make me long to have been present—with  
                    you,  
Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

How you fought with dogs and chickens,  
Playing young women, and the dickens  
Knows what else; you stilled all racket,  
                    that might Thomas' sleep beguile;  
How you wrestled with the taxes,  
How you ground T. Carlyle's axes,  
Making him the more dependent on you—  
Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

Through it all from every quarter  
Gleams, like sunshine on the water,  
Your quick sense of fun and humor, and  
                    your bright, bewitching smile;  
And I own, I fairly revel  
In the way that you say "devil,"  
'Tis so terse, so very vigorous, so like  
Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

All the time, say, were you missing  
Just a little love and kissing,—  
Silly things, that help to lighten many a weary  
                    dreary while?  
Never a word you say to show it;  
We may guess but never know it;  
You went quietly on without it—loyal  
Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

**I**N the days when blue China abounded  
On tables and not on the wall,  
A lady there lived with ungrounded  
Dislike and contempt for it all.

She hated those three weeping-willows,  
And was heartily tired of the sight  
Of those somewhat conventional billows,  
Which roll toward the bridge on the right.

She thought it so very old-fashioned,  
So common, so rough to the hands,  
And she'd talk in a way quite impassioned  
Of the beauty of simple gold bands.

Her granddaughter, fair Angelina,  
When she married Augustus Von Pruyn,  
Had a full set of Haviland china  
Of madly æsthetic design.

She has also a few cherished dishes,  
Which are carefully guarded from whacks,  
In crimson plush frames, and she wishes  
Them all to be mentioned as "plaques."

Yet with all this assortment of faience  
Angelina is far from content;  
She has many a day-dreamy seance  
In which visions keramic are blent.

For small are Augustus's earnings,  
And all modern china she hates;  
So her life is embittered with yearnings  
For some old-fashioned blue Canton plates!

**S**HE asked the price of Crown Derby  
ware,  
She gazed at the Royal Worcester  
Till, to purchase at least a set or two,  
The clerk thought he'd really induced her.

She lingered long over Cloisonne;  
She lovingly looked at Satzuma;  
In fact all the rarest, costliest things  
Were the ones which suited her humor.

The gleam of the beautiful gem-like glass  
Seemed to thrill her very soul,  
And she lost her heart completely in,  
A misshapen India bowl.

Then she turned away with a little sigh,  
And murmured,—“I wish I were richer,”  
And went to a counter where she bought  
A fifty cent Japanese pitcher!

OTHERS may sing of the budding trees,  
The greening grass and the balmy breeze,  
Of the robin's song, and the other things  
We have learned to expect with recurring  
springs:

Others may sing of them—those who can—  
I sing the song of the Japanese fan.

Of the Japanese fan, with its wild, weird birds;  
Its strange and peculiar flocks and herds;  
Its sunsets and thunder-clouds—gloomy fore-  
boders

Of storms that are coming; its peaked pagodas;  
Its flowers of a species quite unknown to man;  
But which flourish and thrive on a Japanese  
fan.



Then there are the women, those curious crea-  
tures,  
With their fortified heads and their queer bias  
features,  
And there is the bird lightly poised on a twig,  
The twig very little, the bird very big;  
And those intricate tangles, without form or  
plan,  
That gleam from the sides of a Japanese fan.  
In the background we often see Mount Fusi-  
yama,  
As sacred an object as Thibet's Grand Lama;  
The shrubs and the bushes most likely are tea;  
But the cross-legged gentlemen—who can  
they be,  
Vacantly gazing as hard as they can,  
While sitting around on a Japanese fan?

Perhaps they are gods—they have rather that  
air;  
Perhaps 'tis a rule of art over there,  
Which no one dare break least he be undone,  
That the gods cross their legs and the storks  
stand on one,  
For thus, since their importation began,  
They have always appeared on a Japanese  
fan.

Whatever they're meant for, I bless one and  
all,  
As I pin them around over spots on the wall,  
As I carelessly stick them in jars and in bowls,  
And cover adroitly the black stove-pipe holes;  
No matter how bare be the desert, I can  
Make it bloom like the rose with the Japan-  
ese fan.

O Japanese fan, if you only had feet,  
I'd lay down before them a rich tribute meet  
In praise of your beauty and use, and the  
    grace

With which you can cover an unsightly place;  
And believe me, I'll sing as long as I can,  
Long may you wave, O Japanese fan!

## I.

**I**T was at the first ball of the season,  
And her coming-out party as well,  
That my heart broke a lance with my reason  
Because of this dear little belle.

For that night I was pained to discover  
That I wanted her all for myself—  
And yet I, in the role of a lover,  
Had long since been laid on the shelf.

So I watched her like coveted treasure,  
And held back the words on my tongue,  
For I said, "Do not spoil her fresh pleasure—  
You are old, and her heart is too young."

## II.

It was well toward the end of the season  
Ere I saw her once more, in a throng;  
And she gaily demanded the reason  
I had kept out of sight for so long.

She had had the "best time" she asserted,  
Though her face had lost all its fresh bloom,  
And she flirted—ye gods, how she flirted!—  
With half of the men in the room.

I no longer adored her so madly,  
And was glad that my love was untold,  
For I thought to myself, rather sadly,  
"I'm too young for a heart grown so old!"

TWO SCENES FROM AN  
UNPUBLISHED DRAMA

104

**I**T was in a garden shady,  
Where the moonbeams softly lay,  
That a lover and his lady  
Met, a sad farewell to say.

There were sighs and sobs in plenty,  
Locks of hair and flowers I ween,  
Tin-types, too,—the youth was twenty,  
And the maiden seventeen.

And his eyes were moist and shiny  
As he tried his love to tell,  
While she, too, turned on the briny  
Most successfully and well.

Then they vowed in terms caloric,  
Nothing should their true love sever,  
And were really Pinaforic  
In their frequent use of "Never."



## TWO SCENES FROM AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA

105

Well, they met. When many seasons  
Neatly had the past interred,  
Doubtless both had had good reasons  
Why the meeting was deferred.

In a widow's cap, beguiling,  
She was (very strange is life,)  
While he came up, pleased and smiling,  
With his pretty second wife.

Bows were made and hands were shaken,  
Then old times were gaily quoted.  
Chirped he: "If I'm not mistaken,  
Wasn't I once quite devoted?"

"Was it you?" She gave another  
Smile,—“I don't remember well.  
It was you or else your brother,  
Which, I really couldn't tell.”

**I**F I were a ghost and you were a ghost,  
And we met in the dead man's land,  
Would your heart rejoice at the sound of my  
voice?

Would you shrink at the touch of my hand?

If you knew at once, as I know you would,  
That all of the pleasure and pain  
Of the gladness of love, and the sadness of  
love

Were to be lived over again,—

Would Heaven seem Heaven, then, do you  
think?

Would you find it a sweet surprise  
If the old unrest, that had died in your breast,  
Should awaken again in the skies?



Or would it not darken that fair new world  
With a shadow of earthly stain?

For if perfect bliss could be marred by my  
kiss,

Then the peace of heaven were vain.

Ah, foolish questions and idle thoughts!

What do we care for the life above,

When our souls we know, wherever they go,

Will die with the death of our love?

**S**HE has been among the lilies  
Where their fragrance rises sweet,  
And the air so soft and still is—  
There have strayed my darling's feet.

She has been among them lately,  
Where they grow so white and tall;  
She has touched their blossoms stately,—  
She, the fairest flower of all!

Something in her face doth show it,  
Breathes the tale where'er she goes;  
Shall I tell you how I know it?  
There is yellow on her nose!

10 A. M.

**A**H, little slippers of dainty make,  
Pointed at toe and high of heel,  
Couldn't you tell me without a mistake  
How to-day does my lady feel?  
Did she tap, tap, tap at the words I wrote?—  
That's an ominous sign, you see.  
Did she glance at the sky as she read my  
note?—  
Then she will ride to-day with me.

12 M.

Absurd little boot that peeps beneath  
Her habit's hem with silver spur,  
Where her foot lies like a flower in its sheath—  
Who'd be afraid of you—or her?  
“Booted and spurred”—thus my lady rides,  
Yet I survey her quite unawed,  
Such a dashing trooper with “heavy strides;”  
Dear little boot, I fear you're a fraud;

3 P. M.

Snug fitting shoes that appear to cling  
 Round her ankles with conscious pride—  
 Who'd think you would do so shocking a  
                   thing

As almost hourly to come untied?  
 I've knelt before you in many a spot,  
 The proudest and clumsiest of men,  
 But though tied fast in a true-lover's knot,  
 You *always* come untied again.

11 P. M.

Fairy-like slippers that prank and prance,  
 Silk-clad insteps that shine and gleam,  
 Many a night you have led me a dance,  
 Waltzing afterward through my dream!  
 Have you wings like those on Mercury's feet,  
 Slippers that seem to tread on air?  
 Does a glad heart make you so light and fleet,  
 Slippers fit for a bonbonniere?

## SHOES AS THEY ARE WORN 111

Shoes, boots, and spurs that my lady wore,  
Slippers fashioned with cunning art,  
You have walked where no one has walked  
before—

Into the fastness of my heart.  
There I shall keep you as prisoners sweet,  
Hoping some day to set you free,  
When she has promised her dear little feet  
Shall walk the highway of life with me.

**W**ITHIN a frame of Russia leather  
My calendar found place,  
Those numbered days of diverse weather,  
That look so uniform together,  
Yet show such different face.

She took them out—all bound together—  
And in their place I see  
Her pictured face within the leather;  
I cannot tell now of the weather—  
She fills all days for me.

**M**ISS Minerva Van Boston's engage-  
ment is broken,  
She's returned to her lover each letter and  
token  
They have had their last drive and their last  
friendly chat;  
And the rather remarkable reason why,  
Is because he *would* say "between you and I"  
And Minerva Van Boston could not endure  
*that*.

Of a very old family he was a scion,  
And the kind of a man it was safe to rely on,  
With a character no one would dare to im-  
peach.

And in fact in every other respect  
His habits were perfect, his manners correct;  
Yet he *did* make this terrible error in speech.

Miss Minerva Van Boston had tried hard to  
break him,  
She had reasoned in vain, ere she vowed to  
forsake him,  
She had been, as it were, twixt the fire and  
the hammer,  
She had talked to him kindly, firmly, severely,  
And to tell the sad truth, she still loved him  
dearly;  
But dearer by far was her love for her grammar.  
And to live with a man who was slightly defective  
In the daily use of his pronouns objective,  
Would have caused Miss Minerva much  
anguish and worry.  
So with many regrets, and half broken-hearted  
These lovers, poor things, have forever been  
parted  
By the shade of ridiculous old Lindley Murray.



“ONE-LEGGED stork, thou standest  
sad and lonely;

A tear, methinks, I notice in thine eye.  
Oh, tell to me, yes, whisper to me only,  
What is the sorrow which I think I spy?”

And lo, from out the meshes of the tidy  
There came a feeble, mournful sort of squeak;  
And while, amazed, I opened my eyes wide,  
he

Opened his mouth and thus began to speak.

“I am so very tired of being artistic;  
My life is one long, patient, painful ache;  
I am so weary of these weird and mystic  
Positions which they force my form to take.

“They’ve worked me in all kinds and sorts of  
stitches,

High art and button-hole, outline and cross-  
stitch,

Standing around promiscuously in ditches,  
And looking like a buzzard or an ostrich.

"They've worked me frequently on Java  
                  canvas,  
On momie-cloth; on flannels thin and thick;  
In fact, in every single way they can fuss,  
I have appeared until I'm really sick.

"In crewels, in silk, in worsted, and in cotton,  
Now black, now white, now grave, now mad-  
                  ly gay,  
They've worked me, and one wrong is unfor-  
                  gotton,  
They've done me most and worst in applique.

"Sometimes they plant me 'mid some rushes  
                  speary,  
In attitudes no well-bred stork would take,  
Holding one leg up till I get so weary  
I sometimes think my poor strained back  
                  will break.

"They've worked me standing, running,  
                    sleeping, flying,  
Sometimes I'm gazing at a crewel sun;  
They've worked me every way, I think, but  
                    dying.

And oh, I wish they'd do that and be done!

"I could forgive them all this bitter wronging,  
If they would grant one favor, which I beg,  
Would gratify but once my soul's deep long-  
                    ing,  
Just to put down my cramped and unused  
                    leg.

"Know you of any one with sorrows greater?  
A creature with a life that's more forlorn?  
Hounded forever by the Decorator;  
I wish, I wish, I never had been born!"

A silence fell. I gazed; he had subsided.  
I listened vainly. All was dumb and still  
Upon the tidy, where the stork resided,  
With upheld leg, and red and open bill.



OH, GREAT TRUE HEART!



OH, great true heart that sailed life's  
stormy seas  
With fearless courage in the roughest blast,—  
The voyage is over,—you have come at last  
To a safe, sheltered harbor, that will please  
Your sea-worn ship, and give your tired soul  
ease !  
I see you still, as often in the past,—  
The fleck of ocean on your brown hair cast,  
The sea blue in your eyes ! Ah, God's de-  
crees  
Bore you from us this time, as oft before,  
Under "sealed orders." With our narrow  
scope  
We cannot see you on that distant shore, —  
Yet we, left here, with our great grief to cope,  
Think of the stars, that all your life you wore,  
And know the anchor is the sign of hope.

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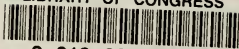
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